

Remarks

Claims 1-11 and 13-16 are pending in the present application. By this reply, claim 12 has been canceled. Claims 1 and 11 are independent.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1-4 and 6-16 have been rejected 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the combination of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,966,473) and Syeda-Mahmood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,621,941). Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Takahashi et al. and Syeda-Mahmood et al., and further in view of Saitoh (U.S. Patent No. 5,220,621). These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

Without acquiescing to any of the Examiner's allegations made in rejecting these claims, to expedite prosecution only, independent claim 11 has been amended to incorporate therein dependent claim 12. In the similar manner, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 12. As such, the Examiner's remarks pertaining to previous claim 12 will be addressed below.

Regarding previous claim 12 (the subject matter of which has been now added to independent claims 1 and 11), the Examiner rejects previous claim 12 by alleging that Takahashi et al. discloses the feature of storing the characterization data in the second database as recited. To support his position, the Examiner cites column 7, lines 38-

column 8, line 35 of Takahashi et al. Applicants have reviewed this portion of Takahashi et al. and disagrees with the Examiner that it discloses the claimed features.

Particularly, Takahashi et al. discloses at column 8, lines 33-35 that “where the size of the quadrilateral is always constant, the width 707, the height 709 and the thickness of frame 711 are not required to be specifically controlled”. That is, in Takahashi et al., there is no need to specify characterization data since they have fixed values all over the document. Thus, Takahashi et al. does not disclose “storing characterization data such that the box subsequently can be identified automatically without any point P within said box being designated, for next documents of a same type” as recited in independent claim 1 and similarly in independent claim 11. It should also be noted that Takahashi et al.’s “quadrilateral” refers to one-character box, whereas in Applicants’ claimed invention, the box is associated with the characters.

Furthermore, neither Syeda-Mahmood et al. nor Saitoh et al. corrects this deficiency of Takahashi et al. Accordingly, even if the references were combinable, assuming *arguendo*, the combination of references would still fail to teach or suggest at least the above-noted features recited in independent claims 1 and 11. Thus, independent claims 1 and 11 and their dependent claims (due to their dependency) are patentable over the applied references, and the rejections are improper and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, Applicant(s) respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and earnestly solicits an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

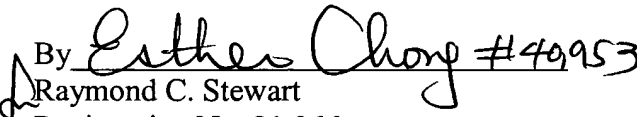
The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final, in that it raises no new issues but merely places the claims in a form more clearly patentable over the references of record. In the alternative, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final in that it reduces the issues for appeal.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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